



Heybridge Parish Council

ANNUAL REPORT

**1st APRIL 2015 to
31st MARCH 2016**

Contact Details

Parish Councillors

Dr. Michael Blyth
Selkirk House, 8 Rennie Walk
Heybridge

Simon Burwood
104 Long Common
Heybridge

Tina Gentry
102 Wagtail Drive
Heybridge

Keith Moodey
The Heybridge Inn
Heybridge

Michael Edwards
8 Doubleday Drive
Heybridge

Zofia Edwards
8 Doubleday Drive
Heybridge

Stephen Jennings
123 Holloway Road
Heybridge

Keith Lawson
2 Chapel Lane
Heybridge Basin

Richard Perry
Mill House Hotel
Langford

Prof. Lew Schnurr
42 Basin Road
Heybridge Basin

Gary Young
6 Mayland Close
Heybridge

District Councillors

Anne Beale (Heybridge East)
93 Hillary Close
Heybridge

Bryan Harker (Heybridge East)
32 Wagtail Drive
Heybridge

Ian Dobson (Heybridge West)
6 Emperor Close
Heybridge

Miriam Lewis (Heybridge West)
24 Beeches Road
Heybridge

County Councillor

Rodney Bass
Five Corners
Maypole Road
Wickham Bishops

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT MUNICIPAL YEAR 2015 – 2016

1. Overview

1.1 Heybridge Parish Council plays an important role at the grassroots level of Local Government (Tier One), directly representing and promoting the interests of its community. In addition to the Councillors, who are your unpaid representatives, the Parish Council employs a Clerk (see 1.7) to carry out its business and ensure that the many statutory requirements of the Parish Council are met.

The Clerk manages the Parish Council business such as financial matters, employee supervision, minutes, meeting arrangements, paperwork, agendas etc as well as the management of Plantation Hall, King George V Playing fields and other areas of responsibility (see 4.1).

An election is held every four years and qualified persons nominate themselves for office. If an election is held, the council will be voted in to serve the electorate of the parish. If during the four year period there is a vacancy, due to a resignation or other reason, the position is advertised. Should no-one come forward for election, the Parish Council is permitted to co-opt someone to fill the vacancy.

Funding for Parish Council activities is by precept, levied on Maldon District Council which is then collected from households within the village through Council Tax payments.

The Parish Council is non-political. It is solely involved in issues, items and developments for the village's benefit and well being. Decisions are decided by vote. Each Councillor has one vote with the Chairman of the Parish Council also having a casting vote, if required.

The Parish Council can refer matters they consider requiring action – such as issues concerning the local environment, highways, footpaths, policing etc to Maldon District Council or Essex County Council, for their attention. The Parish Council does not have any powers in its own right, but acts as a “ Pressure Group ” ***to try to get things done!***

The Parish Council deals with local people and local matters on a day to day basis and welcomes help and interest. One way to get involved in local community matters is to stand for election to the Parish council.

Attendance by the public at Parish Council meetings is also welcomed. Contact details and meeting dates are published on the Parish Council's website as are our Policies and Procedures and the Register of Parish Councillors Interests.

The Parish Council has applied for the Quality Award of the Local Council Award Scheme which demonstrates that a council has achieved good practice in governance, community engagement and council improvement.

1.2 I was elected Chairman of Heybridge Parish Council in May 2015 for the fifth year running. The Parish Council is a local authority under the terms of the Local Government Act 1972 and came into operation on 1st April 1987 following the creation of the civil parish of Heybridge in 1986. It consists of twelve members (Parish Councillors) who are elected every four years. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman are elected by the Parish Council at its Statutory Annual Meeting in May.

1.3 Heybridge Parish Council has a variety of roles. It has direct responsibility for various land, property, amenity areas and car parks within Heybridge and Heybridge Basin and is consulted on a wide variety of topics, where it will express views and exert influence whenever the interests of Heybridge and its residents are affected.

1.4 In addition to the Council itself the Parish Council delegates certain of its functions to the Planning Committee, Budget Committee, Personnel Committee and the Events Committee, appointed each year at the Statutory Annual Meeting.

1.5 During the last municipal year, I also held the post of Chairman of the Personnel Committee, Councillor Prof Lew Schnurr was appointed Vice-Chairman of the Parish Council, Chairman of the Budget Committee and Chairman of the Planning Committee and Councillor Dr Michael Blyth was appointed chairman of the Events Committee.

1.6 During the last municipal year we held two by-elections and the Parish Council gained three new members including Tina Gentry, Zofia Edwards and Keith Moodey. In addition the Parish Council co-opted Simon Burwood. Unfortunately Mike Hall resigned in March 2016 so the Parish Council now has 11 members. It is hoped that this vacancy will shortly be filled.

The Parish Council wishes to thank Mike Hall for his contribution during his time as Parish Councillor.

1.7 Laurie Wiebe (CiLCA) is the Parish Council Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer and will continue in her role as the Parish Emergency Co-ordinator. John Williams acts for the Council as the internal Auditor and Janice Martin is our financial contractor.

1.8 The Parish Council office at Plantation Hall is manned Mondays – Fridays between 08.00 hrs and 15.00 hrs. Amanda Hilton is our part time administration assistant, Bernie Hall was our day caretaker, Denise Kemp is our evenings and weekend caretaker and Keith Locke is our groundsman. Unfortunately after over 14 years Bernie Hall has decided to retire. The Parish Council wishes to thank Bernie for his hard work and commitment to the Council and wishes him and his family well for the future. Nicky Percy has taken over as our day caretaker and the Council is actively looking for a relief caretaker.

Our admin assistant, evening and weekend caretaker and day caretaker are qualified fire marshals and our day caretaker, admin assistant and our Clerk are qualified first aiders. In addition our admin assistant and day caretaker have completed Level 2 in Health & Safety and our admin assistant has completed Level 2 in Risk Assessment. Our staff training programme for this year will include fire marshal training for our Clerk.

1.9 Anne Beale, Ian Dobson, Bryan Harker, and Miriam Lewis are our District Councillors representing Heybridge and Heybridge Basin. Rodney Bass is our County Councillor.

The Parish Council wishes to thank our County and District Councillors for their hard work in looking after the interests of Heybridge and Heybridge Basin.

The Parish Council continues its membership of the Essex Association of Local Councils (EALC), the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), the Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE), the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE), the Chelmer Canal Trust and the Greater Thames Estuary Partnership.

The Parish Council Clerk is a member of the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) and serves on the SLCC Essex Branch Committee. In addition, the Clerk is a member of the Institute of Local Council Management (ILCM) and the International Institute of Municipal Clerks (IIMC). The admin assistant is undergoing the 'Introduction to Local Council Administration' (ILCA) course with a view to becoming our Assistant Clerk on completion.

2 Planning, Highways and Environment

2.1 The Parish Council is notified of all planning applications affecting Heybridge and Heybridge Basin, and due consideration is given to the comments to be submitted to the District Council. Planning Applications are available for inspection thirty minutes prior to the Parish Council or Planning Committee meetings at Plantation Hall.

2.2 During the last municipal year over 70 planning applications were commented on by the Parish Council.

2.3 The Parish Council is well aware of concerns with regards to flooding and loading on the local infrastructure when considering development proposals. The Council has also contributed to the Local Development Plan (LDP) and The Maldon Design guide. This sets out the criteria in planning for the Maldon district for the period 2014 - 2029.

The Parish Council understands the concerns of residents on the LDP and its effect on Heybridge and is endeavouring to clarify and make representation, as far as it can, to Maldon District Council. The Parish Council now has a seat at the pre-application stage of larger developments and has had several meetings especially in reference to Community Gain (Section 106 agreements).

The Parish Council has also started the process to produce a Neighbourhood Plan. The first stage of which was to produce the Neighbourhood Plan boundary, which after concern from Essex County Council, Maldon District Council and a neighbouring Parish Council, was amended and approved by Maldon District Council in January 2016.

The Neighbourhood Planning Task and Finish Working Group, consisting of local businesses, members of the public and Parish Councillors, is meeting on a regular basis putting together a draft Neighbourhood Plan for consideration. Public consultations will follow in due course.

2.4 The Parish Council, through its representatives, continues to liaise regularly with Essex County Council on local highway matters. This is carried out via the Highways Panel which meets on a regular basis to discuss highway matters throughout the district.

There are a number of issues which the Parish Council have concerns about including speed limits, verge reconstruction, road signage and Village Gateways.

2.5 Cllr Gary Young was nominated as our Public Rights of Way Liaison Warden and Les Hammans volunteered as the Parish Tree Warden.

2.6 The Parish Council has also joined the Maldon & Blackwater Estuary Coastal Community Team whose main aim is to ensure the long term viability of the river estuary and promote its attractions such as tourism and marine activities and to increase visitors to the Maldon District.

2.7 The Parish Council has also appointed Cllr's Dr Michael Blyth and Zofia Edwards as its School Liaison Representatives especially with Heybridge Primary School and is in the process of forming a working group together with Maldon Town Council with a view to setting up a combined Youth Council.

2.8 The Parish Council has appointed Cllr Richard Perry as its Tourism and Leisure representative, Cllr Simon Burwood as its representative on the Elms Farm Conservation Group, Cllr Prof Lew Schnurr as its Parish Passenger Transport representative and Cllr Dr Michael Blyth as its representative on Health matters.

3 Finance

3.1 For the Financial Year 2015/2016 the Parish Council has maintained a careful use of resources to remain within Budget. However due to the implementation of additional staffing, increased running costs and various repairs some elements of the budget had to be revised. In essence, it is considered both reasonable and prudent for the Parish Council in seeking to absorb a budget deficit to strike a balance between the impact this has on both the precept and the working balances.

3.2 Major expenditure items are always put out to tender to ensure best value for money and transparency in the way the Council works and awards contracts. Major expenditure included a new oven for the kitchen, a third amenity light at Green Lane,

improved office lighting and office furniture, new blinds for the main hall and air conditioning for the main hall.

3.3 The Parish Council was also successful in obtaining a grant from the Community Initiative Fund of £5000 towards replacement children's outside playing equipment at Plantation Hall.

3.4 In addition the Parish Council was successful in its application and has been awarded an Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) by the British Heart Foundation. The Parish Council is in the process of carrying out Defibrillator training sessions for Councillors, staff and members of the public as well as CPR methods.

The Parish Council wishes to thank Cllr Gary Young for organising this.

3.5 After review the precept for 2015/16 which is the element of Council Tax covering the Parish Council's budget requirement was increased to £160,070.00 (including Local Council Tax Support Grant).

4. Direct Responsibilities

4.1 The Parish Council has responsibility for Plantation Hall, King George V Playing Field, Childrens Play areas at Plantation Hall and Elizabeth Way, Daisy Meadow Car Park at Heybridge Basin, various amenity and grassed verges including at Larch Walk, Rowan Drive, The Roothings, Green lanes, the Horse Trough in The Street, the War Memorial at Heybridge Cemetery, Bus Shelters at Bentalls shopping centre, Goldhanger Road and Basin Road, a number of bench seats, various litter/dog bins and thirty four amenity off-street lighting.

In addition the Parish Council is responsible for the maintenance of the closed Churchyard at St. Andrew's Church, the surrounds of St. George's Church at Heybridge Basin and Elms Farm Roundabout.

4.2 Plantation Hall and Playing Fields have a high usage factor with very competitive hire rates ensuring a steady income stream. Due to increased running costs we had to review our hires rates for the 2015 / 2016 financial year but still remain competitive. The main hall, the two meeting rooms and playing fields are used extensively.

4.3 Due to the current high demand of the Council's facilities as well as for the future growth of the village the Parish Council decided to investigate the possibility of extending Plantation Hall. To that end the Parish Council commissioned an architect to draw up plans and costings. This is an ongoing project and public consultations will follow in due course.

4.4 Having experienced the third year the Parish Council had agreed to finance the extended Bus Service 288 connecting Maldon to West Heybridge for another year. This operation will be reviewed again for 2016 - 2017.

4.5 The Parish Council is aware of a need and requirement for allotments within the Parish and is actively looking for suitable land in the Parish. Some allotments have

become available in Hatfield Peverel. Allotments have also been set aside in the LDP for the North Heybridge Garden Suburb.

The Parish Council has had a complete tree survey carried out on trees on its land and amenity areas and some work is being undertaken accordingly.

4.6 The Parish Council has nine notice boards throughout the Parish including two in Heybridge Basin, one at the Bentalls shopping complex , one in Holloway Road, one in Ten Acre Approach, one in Temple Way, two at Plantation Hall and one next to the main entrance to the car park at Plantation Hall. We are actively investigating adding two more one in East and one in West Heybridge.

In addition to the Hall activities the names of Parish Councillors, their contact details and Parish Council meetings / Planning Committee meetings dates are displayed.

4.7 The Parish Council considers training to be an integral part of a successful and innovative council. Training assists Councillors reach their full potential, imparting knowledge; skills; competencies; best practice and legal guidance. Councillors are encouraged to attend training sessions where appropriate. The Parish Council also encourages staff training as part of their continuing professional development (CPD).

5. Parish Council in the Community

5.1 The Parish Council will continue to seek to exert influence in relation to those things which affect Heybridge and Heybridge Basin and its residents. The Parish Council works closely with both the District and County Councils.

5.2 The Parish Council, through its representatives, maintains regular contact with the District Council, Essex County Council, Highways, Local Health providers, Elms Farm Park Group, The Parish Passenger Transportation Group, Park Rangers and the Police.

5.3 The Park Rangers carries out regular patrols at Plantation Hall, King George V Playing Fields and Daisy Meadows Car Park to help combat anti-social behaviour as well as issue fines for dog fouling and parking enforcement. Not only are the Park Rangers acting as a deterrent but they have meaningful dialogue with the youngsters as well.

The Parish Council wishes to thank the Park Rangers for their important work during the year.

5.4 The Parish Council looks to support local organisations and community groups in their work. This past year it has contributed to the Maldon Cricket Club, Oars and Paws Fun Dog Show, the Darby and Joan Club, the PCC United Benefice of Heybridge, the Heybridge Neighbourhood Group, Heybridge Social Football Club, The Heybridge Residents Association, the Goldhanger Road Group and the Blackwater Social Football Club. In addition the Parish Council has contributed financially towards St Andrew's Churchyard railings which had been damaged.

The Parish Council has instigated a 'Charity of the Year' which is nominated at the Statutory Annual Council meeting. For 2015 – 2016 the Heybridge and Maldon Community Responders were nominated.

5.5 The Remembrance Service last November was well supported by both the uniformed organisations and general public. The Parade started from Plantation Hall with a short service at the Memorial and parade back. Refreshments were served to everyone afterwards at Plantation Hall. Plans along the lines of last year's service will be put into place for this year's service in due course.

The Parish Council wishes to thank all those who helped and took part.

5.6 The Parish Council has embarked on a programme for more interaction with the community which includes regular 'Meet your Councillor' days, 'Bulb Planting' days involving local schools, 'Clean up Days', Quiz Nights and of course the Heybridge Community Festival.

The Parish Council had a 'Council Stall' at the annual Clarks Farm Greyhounds Show held on the King George V playing fields in September 2015.

5.7 The Parish Council will continue to publish the Heybridge Herald quarterly. This is part of raising the profile of Heybridge Parish Council as well as to inform the Community the details of their Parish Councillors, their contact details, what facilities are available to them and to notify the community of upcoming events. The Heybridge Herald can now be viewed on our website.

Following the success of the Community Festival held last year the Council has decided to host another Community Festival this year which will be held on Sunday 31st July 2016. As before the Events Committee will be organising the festival and it has now become an annual fixture in the Council's diary. The Parish Council wishes to thank all those involved in organising the Community Festival.

The Parish Council continues to hold fundraising events designed to raise funds for our 'Charity of the Year' as well as help finance various events the Council may put on throughout the year. A BBQ and a Fish & Chip supper organised by Cllr Perry was a great success as was a recently held Quiz night.

Further details of these events will be published in the Heybridge Herald and on the notice boards as and when. The Parish Council wishes to thank all those involved with organising and taking part in these functions.

5.8 The Parish Council website is regularly updated and contains a wide range of information pertaining to the Council and its activities, including agendas, minutes, dates of meetings and Councillor contact details. The Council has a 'Facebook page' on its website to help promote its activities as well as create a greater awareness of its work.

5.9 At the Annual Parish Council meeting on the 21st May 2015 the issue of 'Town Status' was discussed and it was agreed to defer this topic to the Annual Parish meeting in April 2016.

The continued support and work of the Parish Council's staff is valued and crucial to the Parish Council's work and achievements.

Cllr. Michael Edwards
21st April 2016
Chairman
Heybridge Parish Council

Year End Financial Report 2015-2016

Coding		Budget	Actual 31/03/2016	Debtors & Creditors	Total
<u>RECEIPTS</u>					
5001	Precept	153,000	160,700.00		160,700.00
6001	Lettings	30,000	38,557.25	1,882.50	40,439.75
6002	Letting Deposits		2503.00		2503.50
7001	Deposit Account Interest		950.40		950.40
	VAT income		484.37		484.37
8001	VAT Refunds		12,508.23	4,375.52	16,883.75
9001	Other	1,000	1,148.93		1,148.93
9002	Grants				
		£184,000	£216,222.18	£6,258.02	£222,480.20
<u>PAYMENTS</u>					
<u>PLANTATION HALL</u>					
2501	Equipment & Materials	1,200	2597.98	12.50	2,610.48
2201	Services (incl. Rates)	18,000	11,727.83	44.23	11,772.06
2401	Works and Maintenance	10,000	9,489.17	140.00	9,629.17
2301	Refunds of Deposits		2,772.70		2,772.70
		32,200	26,587.68	196.73	26,784.41
<u>OTHER EXPENSES</u>					
3001	Grass Cutting and Ground Maintenance	22,500	11,858.14	9,549.35	21,407.49
3101	Salaries & Pension Contributions	59,000	64,803.97		64,803.97
3201	Daisy Meadow Rates	6,000	5,760.00		5,760.00
3301	Ins/Subs/Misc	5,000	6,476.75		6,476.75
3401	Other Works - Repairs/Improvements	4,000	3,994.05	350.00	4,344.05
3501	Playground Equipment	3,000	17,065.10		17,065.10
3502	Playground Maintenance	2,000	219.04		219.40
3601	Street and Other Lighting	3,000	4,776.60		4,776.60
3701	Professional Fees - Planning/Support	5,000	635.58	1,261.00	1,896.58
3901	Elections	1,500	195.84		195.84
4201	Travel	500	638.28		638.28
4301	Events	1,500	1,419.67		1,419.67
4401	Specialist Equipment (Plantation Hall)	500	425.00		425.00
4501	Office Equipment	2,000	4,172.00		4,172.00
4601	General Office	4,000	5,311.97	89.21	5,401.18
4701	Chairman's Allowance	1,000	160.00		160.00
4702	Hospitality	1,000	514.99		514.99
4801	Training	2,500	3,361.10		3,361.10
4901	Support Services	8,000	6,280.00	400.00	6,680.00
1202	Promotional/Publicity	3,000	2,174.04	210.00	2,384.04
1210	MDC Park Rangers	5,500	4,829.03	1,935.64	6,764.67
		143,500	145,071.25	13,795.20	158,866.45
<u>PROJECTS / SECTION 137</u>					
3702	Neighbourhood Plan	20,000	3,288.81		3,288.81
1371	Donations	2,000	2,335.00		2,335.00

1375	Bus Service	6,700	6,325.00	575.00	6,900.00
		28,700	11,948.81	575.00	12,523.81
	RUNNING COSTS SUB TOTAL	204,400	183,607.74	14,566.93	198,174.67
	VAT RECOVERABLE		17,368.12		17,368.12
		£	£	£	£
		204,400	200,975.86	£14,566.93	215,542.79
	SURPLUS(DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR	-20,400	15,246.32		6,937.41
	ACCUMULATED FUNDS, B/F	132,500	132,500.22		132,500.22
	ACCUMULATED FUNDS, C/F	111,605	147,251.54		138,942.63